

## Part 1: Plan Implementation with an Adaptive Management Approach

The WRIA 8 Steering Committee's Mission and Goals statements that direct the development and implementation of this plan are ambitious. They encourage an approach to plan implementation that provides confidence that the activities undertaken are effective and timely and that the WRIA partners develop and use tools to show progress toward achieving the Mission and Goals. They reflect deeply held interests in returning Chinook salmon in the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed to robust health, making strategic and cost-effective decisions about how to spend limited resources, and maintaining the region's quality of life. They call for clear communication with the public about the successes and challenges that will be part of plan implementation. Meeting any one of these interests alone would be difficult, and crafting an approach to meeting them all together is truly challenging.

In recognition of this challenge, the implementation of this plan will take advantage of fundamental principles of adaptive management. This reflects the basic assumption that adaptive management principles offer strategies and techniques that are useful in addressing the unique complexity of salmon recovery in WRIA 8. Another factor influencing the choice to employ these principles is guidance offered in several documents pertaining to WRIA 8's salmon planning work. These documents include the *Coastal Conservation Guidance*<sup>1</sup> from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); the *Technical Guidance for Watershed Groups in Puget Sound*<sup>2</sup> from the Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT); and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) *An Outline for Salmon Recovery Plans*<sup>3</sup>. Each of these documents, produced by an agency with a significant role in salmon conservation and recovery, recommends the application of adaptive management principles in the development of plans intended to return salmon populations to robust health.

### Applying Adaptive Management Principles

Using adaptive management principles appropriately and strategically depends foremost upon establishing a common understanding among decisions-makers and stakeholders about what adaptive management is. Here are several features of adaptive management and how they relate to meeting the plan implementation goals in WRIA 8:

- *A systematic process for improving future management actions by learning from the outcomes of implemented actions*<sup>4</sup>. It may be helpful to think about this theme as implementing a series of activities that support learning and strategic decision-making. One way to depict such a process is shown in Figure 2.1.1. The graphic shows both a series of specific activities and arrows that indicate the importance of

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1salmon/salmesa/pubs/salmrest.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sharesalmonstrategy.org/files/Guidance%20Document02-03-03a.pdf>

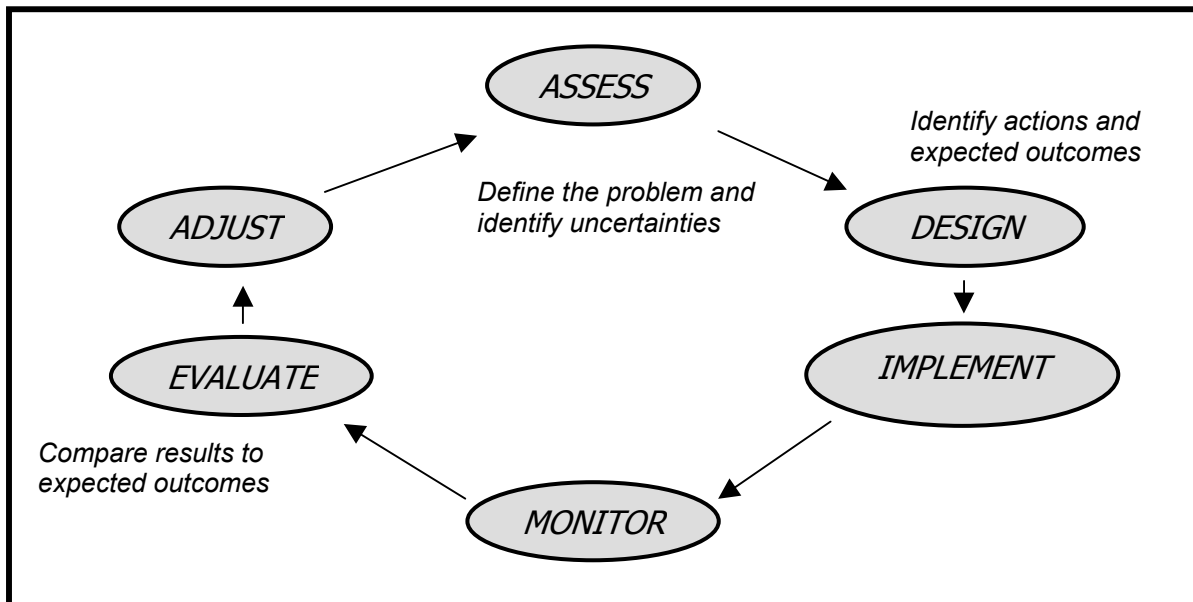
<sup>3</sup> [http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/recovery/recovery\\_model.htm](http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/recovery/recovery_model.htm)

<sup>4</sup> From David Marmorek/ESSA, "What is Adaptive Management?", a presentation to the Washington Trout./ Seattle Public Utilities Adaptive Management Conference, February 13-14, 2003; Seattle, WA

establishing purposeful and explicit connections between the activities – each action informs the next action. Undertaking actions that address the activities without giving similar consideration to the connections between them will lead to ineffective or inefficient plan implementation.

- *A means to reduce the risk of insufficient investments and misdirection of future funding.* There is considerable interest in making timely and cost-effective use of resources to make habitat improvements that support achievement of salmon conservation goals. Adaptive management calls for using actions as learning tools that can direct the next conservation dollar to the most beneficial action available at that time.
- *Setting reasonable expectations and timeframes.* Both the technical limitations on predicting and diagnosing the response of salmon to habitat actions and the long timeframe needed to draw confident conclusions encourage cautious optimism about the near-term benefits of habitat actions. An adaptive management approach calls for quantitative and qualitative statements of what WRIA 8 partners hope to

**Figure 2.1.1 – Plan Implementation Steps within an Adaptive Management Approach**



achieve through the plan and the use of analytical tools that give a sense of how actions move habitat and salmon conditions toward those goals and objectives. It also calls for building and sustaining an organization that can drive implementation of actions over the timeframe within which WRIA 8 partners can realistically expect to reach their goals.

- *Taking action even though there is uncertainty.* The long-standing interest of WRIA 8 partners in salmon conservation, the gravity of the salmon conservation challenge,

and the availability of funding for salmon conservation have all ensured that important actions have already been undertaken. While these actions continue and new ones are implemented, the unavoidable uncertainties inherent in complex ecological challenges like salmon conservation must be recognized. These uncertainties originate in the unpredictability of the response of salmon to habitat management actions, the limits of existing analytical techniques to accurately describe this response, and the varying – and potentially very long – timeframes necessary for data collection to accurately describe the response. This uncertainty should be used to foster a sense of urgency to implement the most effective actions.

- *Communicating information to the public and building understanding.* Learning is an integral part of plan implementation within an adaptive management approach. As plan implementation moves forward, more will be learned about how salmon use the watershed and how habitat actions can and do benefit them. Implementers will need to communicate what they learn with a wide variety of audiences with a stake and an interest in how well the plan works.
- *Expecting surprise and capitalizing on “crisis”.* One thing that is certain in implementing actions over the near and long term is that habitat and political or social conditions change unexpectedly and that salmon will respond in ways that contradict assumptions. While the actions recommended in the plan should be based upon reliable and credible technical information, plan implementation should go forward with openness toward learning from the unexpected. Denying that the results of some actions are surprising, or worse, avoiding analysis of unexpected results, lessens the ability of WRIA 8 partners to make informed decisions and increases the likelihood of repeating predictable and avoidable mistakes.
- *Distinguishing mistakes from failure.* The actions WRIA 8 partners commit to and implement will rely on scientists’ best -- but probably incomplete -- understanding of biology and ecology. Therefore a solid scientific foundation must be created that will allow implementers to conclude when the appropriate response to assessment of progress is “We’ve learned we need to correct our strategy” or when it should be “We’re never going to achieve our goal!” Not every instance in which expectations are not met means the failure of the overall effort, but the tools must be developed that will allow implementers to know the difference.

## **Elements Necessary for Adaptive Implementation of This Plan**

The adaptive management literature identifies the basic elements of an adaptive management-based program to implement a plan like this one. Creating an implementation structure that lacks any of these elements would limit the ability to adapt in response to knowledge gained through the implementation of actions. It would also increase the likelihood that investments would not be as cost-effective in working toward the Steering Committee Mission and Goals. The elements of an adaptive management program are:

1. *Goals*
2. *Assumptions and uncertainties* about key habitat and species factors related to the goals
3. *Specific actions* believed to contribute to achieving the goals
4. *Hypotheses* about the contribution of the actions to the goals
5. *Measures* to assess the effectiveness of the actions
6. *Data collection* supporting the measures to assess effectiveness
7. *Communication* at all levels of the results of actions and the improvement of knowledge
8. *Resources* sufficient to carry out each element over the necessary time period and geographic area
9. *An organizational (decision-making) structure* that defines roles and responsibilities for each element
10. *Commitments* to implement the plan and its actions
11. *A systematic process* that links these elements together predictably

One objective for this draft of the WRIA 8 plan is to take significant steps toward describing how each of these elements is created and/or sustained in support of plan implementation over the coming years. This chapter describes actions and Steering Committee decisions that pertain to each of the elements in general, and several of them specifically, including numbers 7, 9 and 11. The other chapters in this document address the remaining elements.

## Part 2: Organization, Roles and Responsibilities for Plan Implementation

As Part I of this chapter highlights, implementation efforts that include a commitment to managing adaptively need a clearly defined organizational strategy. Managing adaptively requires taking a *systematic* approach to learning about the results of implemented actions, and using that learning to improve future actions. This ongoing process of learning and adjusting course is unlikely to occur unless the plan itself includes an agreement on how the steps involved in adaptive management will be carried out, and by whom. For example, the plan must describe who will gather the information needed to evaluate which actions have been implemented, what the results of specific actions have been, and how the actions together have cumulatively influenced the health of habitat and salmon runs. It must also describe how the information will be interpreted and by whom. Lastly it must describe how decisions making will occur; who will receive information once its interpreted, and how decisions will be made in response to ensure that priorities are on course to maximize the benefits of limited resources in achieving recovery of salmon runs in the watershed.

The WRIA 8 Steering Committee has devoted considerable attention to discussing how to organize an adaptive approach to implementing the WRIA 8 plan. Specifically, the Committee has deliberated about which specific “functions” will be most critical. The committee also considered how roles and responsibilities should be organized to ensure that those functions are carried out successfully and cost-effectively.

One of the central questions explored during these deliberations concerns how “regional” the implementation process should be. WRIA 8 partners have collaborated closely over the last five years to develop a conservation strategy based on sound science, and to identify recommended projects, programs and regulatory changes needed to fulfill that conservation strategy. As the WRIA transitions from plan development to on-the-ground plan implementation, an important question facing WRIA 8 partners is: which aspects of implementation should be accomplished jointly, through continued collaboration among the partners, and which aspects should be accomplished by individual WRIA partners acting on their own discretion? The Steering Committee has carefully considered this question, and has provided clear direction on where structured collaboration will be most beneficial.

This section highlights the recommended approach to organizing plan implementation, based on input provided by the Steering Committee. The section first highlights lessons learned in WRIA 8 by examining the experience of other watershed protection and restoration groups around the country that have made the transition from planning to implementation. It then describes a set of key functions that the Steering Committee has agreed will be necessary to support an adaptive approach to implementation, along with suggested roles and responsibilities based on Steering Committee feedback. Lastly, it presents a matrix summarizing the organizational strategy. The matrix also provides some initial recommendations about possible staffing and resources.

### ***Lessons from other watershed protection and restoration efforts***

Many other watershed protection and restoration groups have navigated the transition from developing plans to putting plans into action. Each group has developed a unique approach to implementation based on the scale of its watershed, the nature of the natural resource issues and problems being addressed, and the universe of key stakeholders and institutional contexts. However, comparing these groups before and during their efforts to implement watershed plans yields some common lessons that have helped to inform the Steering Committee's recommended organizational recommendations. For a more detailed description of findings from a review of watershed cases, please see appendix \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***There are many varied approaches to setting up an organizational structure for plan implementation***

An examination of watershed groups around the country reveals that have chosen a variety of organizational structures. Some of the groups have elected to establish a non-profit watershed group once they transition to implementation. Non-profit organizations provide some advantages in the pursuit of external sources of funding. Others have developed temporary, ad hoc regional organizations through agreements similar to the Interlocal Agreements in WRIA 8 and 9. Still others have centralized implementation efforts in a single agency.

#### ***However, nearly all successful watershed groups have created a collaborative committee structure to track and guide plan implementation***

Perhaps the strongest commonality among watershed groups is the commitment to carry some level of collaboration among into the implementation phase. Committees are often formed to actively oversee aspects of implementation. Often there is a policy-level committee representing multiple governments and stakeholders that meets periodically to receive information or make decisions about implementation. Sometimes there are also subcommittees charged with particular tasks.

#### ***Many watersheds have set specific goals and objectives, and have tracked their progress through monitoring***

Across the country, many watershed groups have sought to incorporate some degree of adaptive management into their implementation process. How formal and structured this learning process is varies greatly due to differences in the size of the watershed, the complexity of its plan and the resources available. For example, some watershed groups define a general vision and qualitative goals for their plans, while others define very specific and measurable goals and objectives. Approaches to collecting information, managing data and developing reports to summarize monitoring information also vary widely. But almost all watersheds attempt to track their progress in some way.

***Some watersheds have developed a formal process for revisiting plan priorities***

Regional efforts focused on larger watersheds often have very specific goals, indicators or thresholds towards which progress that can be tracked clearly. Most of these efforts have established a timeline to evaluate and update their plans periodically: often every 5 years, but in some cases annually. Time frames for implementation plans typically range from 5 to 20 years.

***Staffing resources vary widely among watershed efforts, but most have some level of staffing to support coordinated implementation***

Almost all successful watersheds have some level of watershed-wide staffing. In most efforts, there is a staff watershed coordinator assigned to help provide coordination and keep the diverse elements of implementation (stakeholders, meetings, projects, monitoring results) moving smoothly. Beyond a single plan coordinator, staffing positions and levels vary. The level of staffing for each watershed organization typically reflects a balance between the services desired by the stakeholders and the availability of funding to support the recovery effort.

***Implementation in WRIA 8: functions, roles and responsibilities***

The Steering Committee strongly recommends that WRIA 8 partners continue to collaborate and coordinate during Plan implementation. There is a consensus among Steering Committee members that adaptive management will not happen effectively if jurisdictions and stakeholders implement the Plan individually, at their own discretion, and with little or no coordination.

The Steering Committee has developed specific recommendations for how to organize Plan implementation, and where ongoing collaboration and coordination among Plan implementers is most important. These recommendations were developed by considering *how function should drive form*. In other words, the Committee did not consider possible organizational approaches to implementation in the abstract. Rather, it examined what specific functions and tasks are most necessary to support a robust, adaptive implementation process. For each of those necessary functions, the Steering Committee provided input on how they should be accomplished, by whom, and with what degree of regional coordination and support. These decisions about functions, roles and responsibilities together create a recommended organizational strategy for the WRIA 8 Plan.

**Function One: Tracking and Guiding Plan Implementation**

Adaptive plan implementation requires a deliberate process to track if actions recommended in the Plan are implemented, and to what degree. The Steering Committee favors a coordinated approach to tracking the extent of plan implementation, rather than a more decentralized approach in which each jurisdiction tracks its own actions separately.

Specifically, the Steering Committee recommends that an oversight committee be convened and meet regularly to track how actions are implemented across the watershed. This oversight body should include representatives of WRIA 8 local jurisdictions as well as stakeholders such as area business organizations and environmental groups. It should meet periodically to review reports about implementation, and to make decisions based on that information. Decisions could focus, for example, on ways of improving implementation where it is lagging. If high priority actions are not being successfully implemented, the oversight body could agree on strategies to aid implementation such as securing missing resources, addressing institutional or policy obstacles, or providing needed technical assistance to action implementers.

Responsibility for collecting and maintaining information about implementation should lie with local jurisdictions and others who are conducting the actions. However, a common set of implementation measures should be developed to ensure that information from different jurisdictions and stakeholders can be compared and synthesized. This will facilitate the efforts of staff to prepare periodic reports capturing a watershed-scale analysis of overall progress on implementation.

The Steering Committee recommends that a consistent and limited set of measures be developed for all types of actions recommended in the Plan. Different types of measures may be needed for different types of actions -- for example, site-specific projects will have different measures than programmatic actions such as public outreach or changes to regulations and enforcement. Selection of measures should take account of the cost of gathering the information, and the usefulness of the information in gauging progress.

Some staff support will be required to gather data on implementation measures from different jurisdictions and stakeholders, and synthesize it for the oversight body. Information would be synthesized in an annual report on implementation progress, the depth and breadth of which remains to be determined.

## **Function Two: Making Technical Assessments About Effectiveness**

Adaptive management will require a process for compiling and analyzing information describing the result of actions. The Steering Committee generally supports an approach to monitoring that emphasizes a strategic deployment of limited resources to gather the most useful monitoring information in the most cost-effective manner possible. Several different types of information about results will be needed. "Direct effectiveness" monitoring will be needed to evaluate the results of individual actions and make improvements in project selection and design. "Cumulative effectiveness" monitoring will be needed to evaluate how multiple actions are affecting habitat condition and fish populations, and what kinds of overall adjustments in conservation priorities may be needed. Together, these two types of information will support function #3, involving management decisions about how to improve resource allocation to maximize the success of the Plan.



The Steering Committee supports an approach to compiling information that gives individual jurisdictions the role of gathering most of the monitoring data, but emphasizes coordination in the selection of measures, methods, and interpretation of results.

An ongoing technical committee will be an important vehicle for bringing coordination to WRIA assessments of effectiveness. The technical committee would, like the WRIA's current technical committee, include scientists representing numerous jurisdictions and stakeholder organizations. A critical mass of WRIA 8 partners would need to dedicate staff resources to support the work of this committee.

The committee should have several key responsibilities related to the function of developing technical assessments about effectiveness, including:

1. developing a common set of measures and guidelines for data collection, to ensure that data gathered by different jurisdictions and stakeholders can be compared (this work has already been initiated by the existing committee);
2. recommending a complete monitoring plan, including performance measures, to the oversight body (described above) once all action lists are completed and prioritized;
3. developing a shared regional "baseline" against which changes in habitat and fish populations can be gauged;
4. "rolling-up" direct effectiveness monitoring information gathered by jurisdictions and stakeholders to develop reports about the individual and cumulative results of Plan actions;
5. serving as the first point of contact for scientific information such as new studies and reports from outside the WRIA process, and interpreting this information for the oversight body; and
6. providing recommendations for possible changes in science-based conservation priorities to the oversight body.

While the Steering Committee recommends that information about the results of specific actions be collected by jurisdictions sponsoring the actions, it also recommends that a limited set of data about the *cumulative* results of actions be collected through a regionally managed and funded process. For example, there should be a regional process to collect certain measures of land use change needed to evaluate habitat degradation or improvement at a landscape scale. There could also be a regional process to collect annual data on smolt outmigration needed to determine whether and how habitat improvements are affecting smolt survival rates.

There are two possible approaches to gathering this regionally significant data:

**Option One:** Federal and state agencies that will share responsibility for implementing the ESU-wide Recovery Plan could help local watersheds like WRIA 8 to fund and implement a data collection program focusing on the cumulative results of habitat actions. Information on cumulative results by watershed could then be rolled up to help evaluate the progress of recovery across multiple watersheds in the ESU.

**Option Two:** WRIA 8 partners could jointly fund and manage the development of this information.

Under either approach, the technical committee would play an important role in synthesizing the information and presenting it to the oversight body.

The WRIA 8 Steering Committee recognized that potential value of having staff support for a technical committee. A staff person could help coordinate the synthesis and evaluation of data from multiple sources, while also providing logistical support for organizing committee meetings, communications, and work products.

### **Function Three: Evaluating Progress and Making Decisions About Priorities**

The third function is closely tied to the first two. It is also the heart and soul of adaptive management. Adaptive management is most successful when decision-makers are central actors in the process, using current information to adjust priorities and resources for better results.

As in the case of Function One ("tracking and guiding Plan implementation") the Steering Committee recommends that WRIA 8 partners accomplish this collaboratively, to ensure that decision makers across the watershed are directly connected to new information about habitat improvements and fish population responses, and able to collectively make decisions that maximize the success of the WRIA's recovery effort.

The Steering Committee recommends that two distinct groups help to achieve this function. More discussion is needed to define the specific membership and mandates of these two groups, however some preliminary concepts have been advanced.

The oversight body would meet more often than the summit body, and would likely be a smaller group of decision makers. In addition to being responsible for regularly tracking the progress of plan implementation (see Function One) the oversight body would also be the main group to receive annual reports from the technical committee on the effectiveness of habitat projects, public outreach and land use actions. Over time, this body would have responsibility for building a collective picture of how recovery is progressing. With its representation of a range of participating jurisdictions and stakeholders, an oversight body would help to ensure that evaluations of progress towards recovery would be balanced and credible in the eyes of others. In addition, the oversight body would provide guidance to staff involved in plan implementation, and would help staff interpret plan priorities.

The summit body would be the forum through which new information about effectiveness and progress developed by the technical and oversight committees would then be disseminated to a wider body of decision makers across the watershed. The members of the summit body could use this "best available science" for several different purposes:

- Individual members could use the information as a reference point for assessing and making adjustments to local programs, projects and regulations. For example, local jurisdictions could use reports from the WRIA partners as they update local ordinances such as the Critical Areas Ordinance and the

- The summit body could collectively decide to adjust Plan priorities in response to technical assessments, and to change the allocation of resources accordingly
- At the end of the time horizon for the Plan, the summit could consider whether to overhaul the Plan itself and give it a new life.

Together, the oversight and summit bodies would play a central role in making the Plan a living, adaptive document. The Steering Committee has acknowledged that the membership of both of these groups would likely need to evolve over time.

#### **Function Four: Communicating Progress**

A fourth function essential to adaptive implementation of the Plan will be communicating about the results of Plan actions to a variety of audiences who are not directly involved in Plan implementation. External audiences will include regulators such as the National Marine Fisheries Service who are accountable for achieving recovery of chinook salmon, interested citizens in WRIA 8 and the larger Puget Sound area, elected officials, and funders of salmon recovery actions such as foundations and government grant programs.

The Steering Committee strongly supports the notion that ongoing communication with external audiences about progress towards Plan goals will be essential to the Plan's ultimate success. Clear messages and accurate information about the results of habitat actions will help maintain the support of funders, by demonstrating that WRIA 8 partners are using resources wisely to achieve recovery. It will also cultivate public awareness of the work that is being done and public support for local contributions to Plan implementation.

The Steering Committee recommends that communication occur both at the local jurisdiction and at the watershed-wide scale. WRIA 8 partners should actively communicate about their own individual efforts to complete habitat projects or accomplish public outreach or land use initiatives. However, communication to inform external audiences about overall progress towards Plan goals should be coordinated across the watershed via a regional communication strategy.

A regional communication strategy should be designed to achieve effective communication without significant additional cost. It should:

1. include the development of a shared set of messages about progress, tailored for different audiences;
2. take advantage of existing public outreach staff within jurisdictions and stakeholder groups;
3. take advantage, to the greatest extent possible, of existing communications "infrastructure" such as web sites, newsletters, cable TV programs and other venues that can be readily used to disseminate information about what is happening in the watershed; and
4. use modern technologies such as the internet to reach a maximum number of people

The Steering Committee recommends that a subcommittee support the effort to develop and carry out a regional communication strategy for the Plan. This subcommittee could be an extension of the existing Public Outreach Committee, which includes public outreach and stewardship experts from various non-profit organizations and jurisdictions participating in the process. A limited amount of staff support may also help facilitate ongoing communication services. A staff person could help coordinate the use of existing communications infrastructure to "get the word out" from WRIA 8.

### **Function Five: Managing Data Describing Plan Effectiveness**

There are many approaches that could be pursued to manage the storage, access and retrieval of information gathered through monitoring. However, some approaches are better designed to support adaptive implementation.

The Steering Committee agrees that the best approach in WRIA 8 would be one that allows regionally significant habitat and fish data to be shared among WRIA partners. Sharing data will be essential for developing assessments of the WRIA's progress towards improved habitat and improved fish runs at the reach and at the watershed scale. The Steering Committee recommends several actions to lay the groundwork for efficient sharing of data across jurisdictional boundaries. WRIA partners should:

1. work together to develop guidelines for quality assurance and quality control of important data sets
2. agree on a set of clear protocols for sharing data
3. choose mechanisms for sharing data, e.g. web sites, conferences and workshops

The Steering Committee also considered recommending the creation of a data "clearinghouse" for all monitoring data gathered during implementation of the WRIA Plan. Centralizing monitoring data could produce multiple benefits for recovery efforts both within and beyond the WRIA. Having data in one location would greatly facilitate access both for WRIA partners, potentially preventing duplication of mobilization and data gathering efforts and maximizing the resulting learning across jurisdictional boundaries. It would also provide a ready resource for a technical committee to use in updating the EDT model, and in developing assessments of effectiveness for the oversight body. Finally, a clearinghouse could be beneficial for others such as regulators and non-profit organizations that might benefit from the information.

While there are many potential advantages to developing a data clearinghouse, there are also significant uncertainties regarding how it would be structured, and what its development and subsequent maintenance would cost. Moreover, further exploration is needed to determine the best geographic scale for a data clearinghouse. One option would be to create a data clearinghouse for all of Puget Sound, aggregating monitoring data collected in various watersheds that are part of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. State agencies such as the Department of Fish and Wildlife and regional entities such as Shared Strategy may be considering this and other approaches to managing data more efficient access to and use of information.

The Steering Committee recommends further consideration of the concept of a data clearinghouse, in concert with other agencies involved in salmon recovery across the state. In the meantime, the Committee supports an approach to data management that maximizes regional coordination through the development of shared technical standards for data quality assurance and quality control, and common protocols for sharing data across jurisdictional boundaries.

Some staff resources will likely be required to coordinate data management and data sharing among WRIA partners. In addition, there may be a role for the technical committee.

### **Function Six: Securing Funds to Support Plan Implementation**

Lastly, adaptive implementation of the Plan will depend on consistent and aggressive efforts to garner resources, to fund the actions themselves and to fund the implementation process described in this chapter. Across the country, those working to implement long-term natural resource plans have faced great challenges in maintaining steady, stable funding sources that weather changes in economic conditions and political dynamics.

Of all the implementation functions considered by the Steering Committee, the active pursuit of funding is perhaps the one that was most clearly highlighted as being fundamental to the success of the plan. The Steering Committee recommends that considerable effort be devoted to seeking external funds to supplement local contributions to plan implementation. The strategies that should be adopted for securing external funds are described in greater detail in the funding chapter (chapter 7). It is important to note here, however, that the priority placed on seeking funding has several key implications for roles and responsibilities.

First, actively seeking external funds could become an important role for the oversight body. Members of the oversight body could work together on building new relationships and maintaining existing relationships with funders, through lobbying or other means. Oversight body members could also coordinate efforts to transmit written or verbal reports to funders demonstrating the tangible results from resources invested in the WRIA 8 recovery effort.

Second, the Steering Committee has expressed an interest in more actively pursuing grants from grant sources that the WRIA has not tapped in the past. This new push to prepare and submit grant applications will likely require some staff support. In addition, relationship-building efforts such as offering tours of the watershed may also require some logistical support by staff.

## A Proposal for Staffing Support for Plan Implementation

The anticipated completion and ratification of the plan calls for consideration of shifting resources to support activities more closely tied to plan implementation. The Steering Committee discussion of the key Plan implementation functions provided a strong indication of support for carrying the existing collaborative approach into Plan implementation. In expressing this consensus the Steering Committee implicitly raised questions about staff support for the more collaborative functions. In general, whereas activities performed by individual implementers are customarily supported by resources secured or provided by individual implementers, collaborative activities call for resources provided jointly by several implementers. These “resources” may include the time and expertise of practitioners that can contribute to various Plan implementation activities, and the funding needed to pay for that time and expertise. The Steering Committee deliberations are the basis for the following proposed Staffing Plan that aims to 1) describe the desired type of support for collaborative activities recommended by the Steering Committee and 2) estimate the funding need that it implies.

### Proposed Staffing Plan

This Staffing Plan is a staff proposal for further consideration and revision by the Steering Committee as it finalizes its plan. It is based on the *form follows function* discussion of the Steering Committee in regarding the organizational structure for Plan implementation. It describes a base level of staffing associated only with performing activities directly supporting collaboration among plan implementers. There may be additional activities, e.g., training, associated with implementing specific plan actions that decision-makers chose to support with shared resources not discussed in this proposal.

The viability of this, or any, staffing proposal is heavily influenced by the in-kind contributions of staff time by stakeholders to plan implementation tasks. Reliable contributions of jurisdiction staff at a greater level of effort could reduce the need for separately hired, jointly funded staff. The track record within WRIA 8 is that the reliability of such contributions is difficult to guarantee over the near and long term and therefore reliance on them for key collaborative functions is a known risk. A specific example in this proposal of where this risk is being avoided is the creation of a Technical Program Coordinator position that has not existed during plan development, reducing the reliance on prospective contributions of staff time. A specific example in this proposal of where this risk is being taken is relying on a Public Outreach Committee, rather than a jointly funded person, to address public outreach needs. This proposal incorporates the fundamental assumption that individual jurisdictions will allocate staff time to address their individual Plan implementation interests roughly at the level seen during plan development.

This Staffing Plan does not presuppose the vehicle that would fund the positions described or the specific people that would fill the respective positions. It does not presuppose any efficiencies that could be achieved by sharing and jointly funding staff resources with other watersheds. It does not presuppose whether the positions

described should be filled through a traditional hiring process – like that used to fill the positions under the existing ILA – or a consultant contract. Finally, this Staffing Plan does not address the need for resources associated with activities, like specific monitoring tasks and annual report production, that are part of Plan implementation but less directly support collaboration among implementers. Should the Steering Committee want greater assurance that such activities would be performed in accordance with the Plan implementation framework, it could recommend joint funding by plan implementers for staff or consultant support. Joint funding for such purposes is not reflected in this proposal.

The proposed Staffing Plan includes the following positions at the described level of effort and with the following illustrative, but brief, job descriptions:

- Plan Implementation Coordinator: 1 FTE; Convene and staff oversight body and “Summit” body as needed; serve as main point of contact for those seeking Plan implementation status information; oversee work of all other jointly-funded Plan implementation positions; coordinate production of annual reports; convene Public Outreach Committee as needed.
- Technical Program Coordinator: 1FTE; Lead development and implementation of monitoring program; scope and implement jointly funded research activities identified as priorities; coordinate monitoring activities with tribes, agencies, and key stakeholders; oversee and coordinate data management activities; convene Technical Committee as needed; lead production of technical content for annual report.
- Lobbying and Grant Writing Analyst: .5 FTE; Support stakeholders in developing and implementing lobbying strategies/activities supporting Plan actions; track key grant processes offering opportunities to fund Plan actions (e.g., SRFB); write grant proposals.
- Administrative Assistant: .5 FTE; Support other staff in convening committees, producing materials, and communicating about Plan implementation status.

Staff anticipate that this initial proposal will be subject to an iterative discussion among decision-makers and potential funders prior to Plan approval and ratification.

*The following matrix summarizes the roles and responsibilities for the staff positions described in the Staffing Plan proposal and for various stakeholders/groups anticipated to participate in Plan implementation, as described in the preceding text.*

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## **Part 3: Timeline for Plan Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation**

Much time and consideration during the plan development process – and in developing the 2002 Near Term Action Agenda – has been given to identifying actions that can and should be implemented to reach habitat and salmon goals. The planning process is based on, and must lead to, making a difference on the ground through a range of programs, policies and projects implemented by WRIA 8 stakeholders.

There are unavoidable limitations, however, on the ability of WRIA 8 partners to improve habitat and salmon populations conditions enough in the few years after the plan is done to declare victory in recovering ESA-listed chinook and bull trout. This is the case regardless of how specific the habitat actions, or how firm the commitments to implement them, are: detecting salmon response to habitat improvement happens over many years, while stakeholders' ability to make firm commitments of resources to specific actions spans only a few. It is critical, given these limitations, to build and follow a plan implementation timeline that both accounts for our near term opportunities and limitations and maintains attention to the fundamental, longer-term indications of effectiveness and progress. This section describes the basic features of a Plan implementation timeline that meets this need.

The Steering Committee, through Work Sessions focused on Measures/Monitoring, Organizational Structure, and Implementation Timeline, has provided information essential to crafting an initial Plan implementation timeline with activities and milestones that address the following questions:

1. When does the plan implementation clock start ticking?
2. What is the plan implementation horizon?

When will we check on progress implementing the plan?

When will we begin to formally assess plan effectiveness?

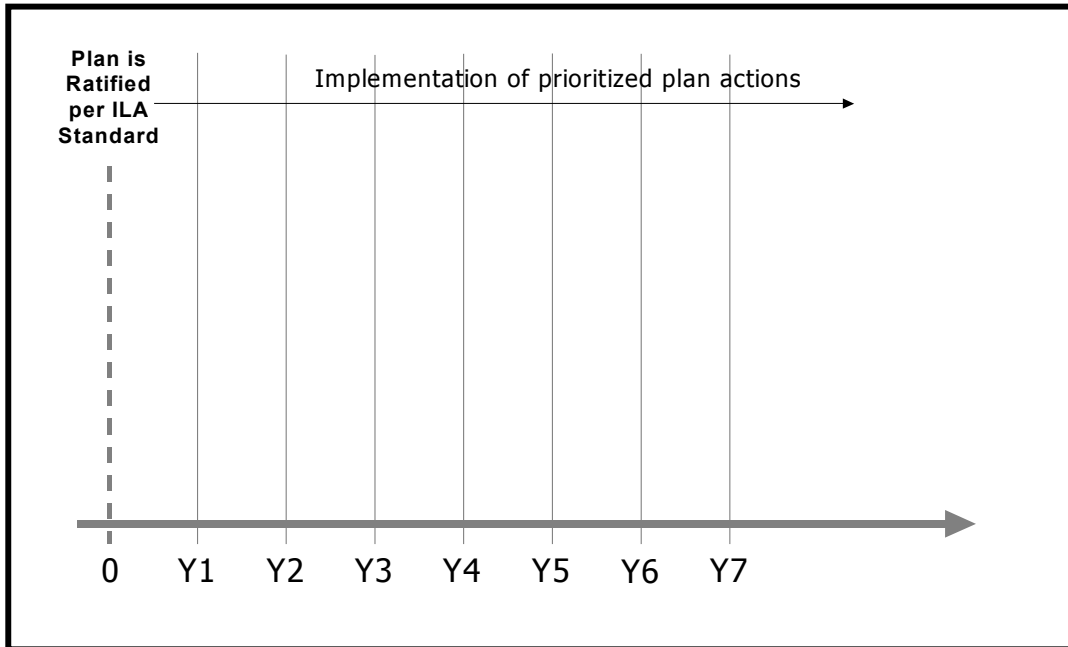
When will plan priorities and results be evaluated?

When will leaders convene to review plan status?

Each of these questions is addressed in the following text. Each is presented with the answer provided by the Steering Committee and a brief description of the factors that were weighed in addressing the question and that will continue to influence how the timeline discussion is fully resolved.

### When does the Plan implementation clock start ticking?

*The Steering Committee recommends that the implementation clock start with the ratification of the Plan.* In making this recommendation the Steering Committee recognized several factors that bear on or emerge from it. Each of these factors is likely to receive additional consideration as the plan moves toward finalization and ratification. They may also affect achieving resolution of issues related to organizational structure, measures and monitoring, funding, and commitments. These factors include the following:

**Figure 2.3.1 – Ratification Starts Plan Implementation Clock**

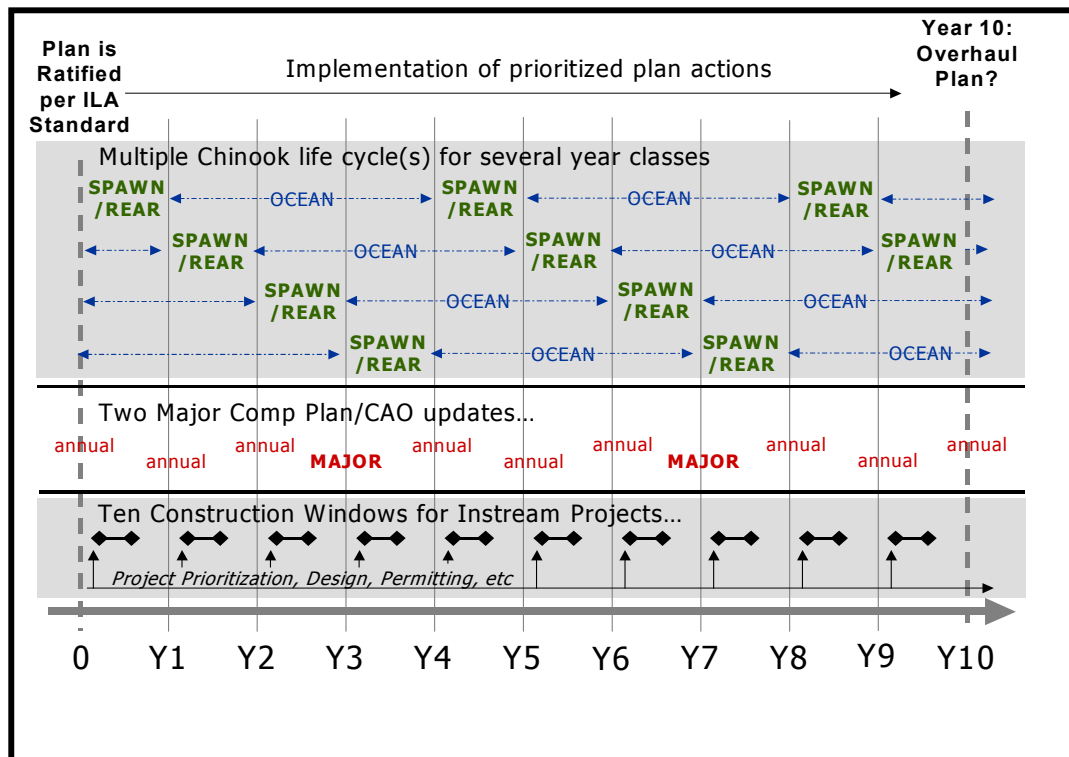
- Setting the baseline for monitoring* – Setting the baseline is an essential element of the monitoring framework for the plan as it establishes the habitat and species conditions to which future conditions will be compared in order to judge progress and effectiveness. The monitoring baseline could be set to coincide exactly with the formal initiation of the plan's implementation phase, but the fundamental aim is to set the baseline as near to when implementers undertake actions so the change attributable to them can be fully captured. The Steering Committee recommends setting the baseline separately from starting the implementation clock. Doing so will accommodate the limitations in the existing data describing conditions and the unpredictable nature of the ratification process. The data assembled by the Technical Committee for use in the EDT work will be the basis for establishing the baseline for monitoring/reporting/evaluation purposes.
- Initiating the Monitoring/Reporting/Evaluation Process* – Starting the implementation clock has symbolic meaning, as representative of moving to the next phase of WRIA 8's salmon recovery effort, and meaning for the logistics and operations of Plan implementation. The monitoring/reporting/evaluation process, described in the following text and a critical part of showing success and progress, will be formally initiated with the start of the implementation clock. The years shown as milestones in the monitoring/reporting/evaluation process are therefore measured from Plan ratification.
- Connecting Ratification to Resources for Monitoring/Reporting/Evaluation* – De-linking ratification from the formal start of implementation increases the risk that

there will be a significant lag between the baseline time and initiation of the monitoring/reporting/evaluation process. This is largely an artifact of the assumption that monitoring of measures of change from the baseline is not possible until ratification and subsequent delivery of resources to fund the work. It is possible that ratification will not happen until mid/late 2005, with monitoring not starting until early 2006, while the baseline could be set at 2003.

### What is the Plan implementation horizon?

*The Steering Committee recommends a ten-year horizon for plan implementation.* A number of factors bear on or emerge from a horizon of that length. Each of these factors is likely to receive additional consideration as the Plan moves toward finalization and ratification. They may also affect achieving resolution of issues related to organizational structure, measures and monitoring, funding, and commitments. The significant factors include the following:

**Figure 2.3.2 – Plan Horizon is 10 Years**



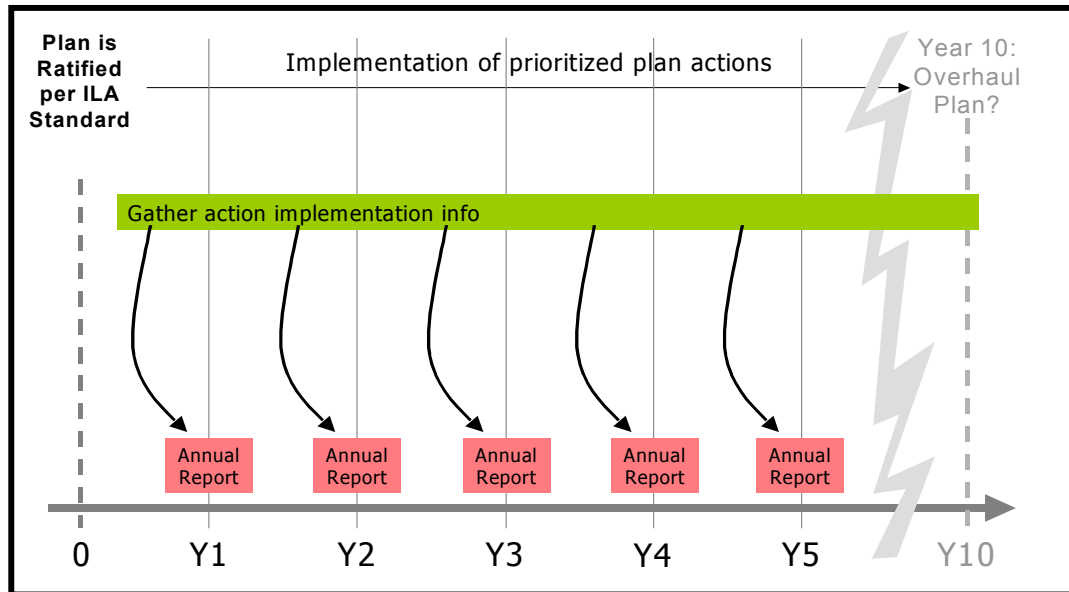
- *Allowing time to see action effects* – By the tenth year after the start of plan implementation there should be a sufficient body of data compiled to allow a solid, but initial, assessment of how salmon populations are responding to the range of habitat actions implemented during that period. A ten-year horizon will also allow each chinook year class at least two opportunities to spawn/rear in habitat changed as a result of Plan actions.

- *Synchronizing the Plan horizon with other relevant processes* – There are numerous processes that are external to the plan that are relevant to the effectiveness of plan actions in moving the WRIA toward the Plan Goals. Such processes include updates of Comprehensive Plans and Critical Areas Ordinances, prioritization of projects within jurisdiction CIP programs, instream flow rule making, and others. Making direct connections to the most important of these processes will be possible but challenging; providing relevant habitat and salmon information indirectly to the other processes is possible but will not likely be a significant work task. Decision-makers must identify the external processes that are the most important and warrant attention when considering specific connections to plan implementation.
- *Plan actions happen over different timescales* – A ten-year horizon does not mean that all activities associated with plan implementation are geared toward a ten-year window. For example, commitments to plan implementation may extend over only a portion of the ten year horizon, and steps in assessing the effectiveness of actions will most likely be taken within a cycle that repeats over an approximately 3 year timeframe. In this context ten years is viewed as the timeframe over which the initial Plan priorities are most likely to be useful as guides for habitat actions, with year ten anticipated to be when serious consideration is given to shifting priorities based on monitoring results.

When will we check on progress implementing the Plan?

*The Steering Committee recommends checking on and reporting Plan implementation progress annually. In addition, it recommends the production of an annual report describing the actions that were implemented during that year and summarizing the Plan activities undertaken from the start of implementation.* The significant factors bearing on or emerging from these recommendations, and likely to receive additional consideration as the Plan moves toward finalization and ratification, include the following:

**Figure 2.3.3 – Annual Check-in on Plan Implementation Progress**

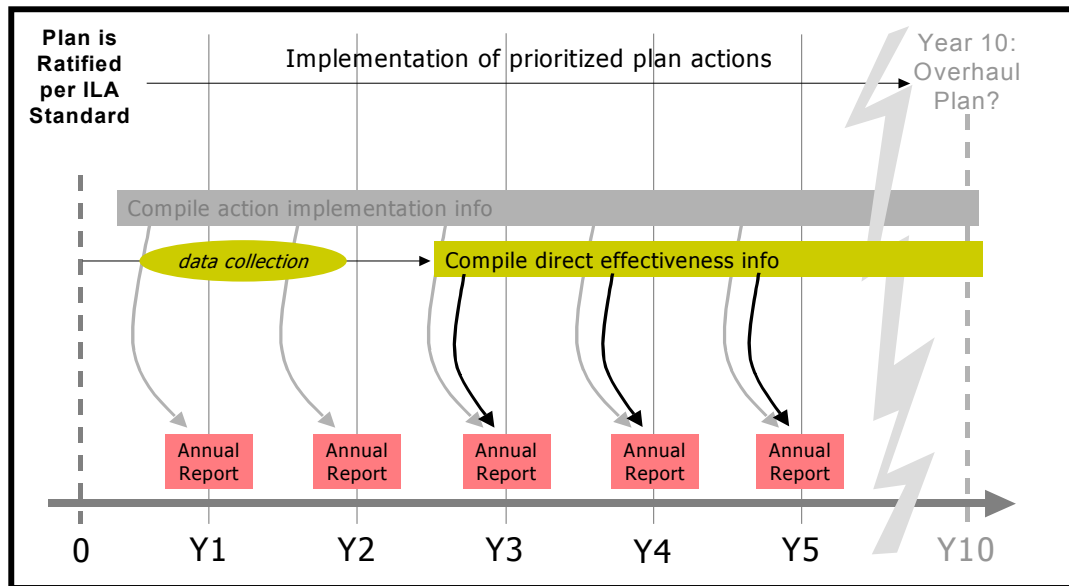


- *Transition to Plan implementation* – Regardless of when the implementation clock starts, the first year of plan implementation will likely include activities associated with mobilizing people and resources supporting the plan implementation framework. This may include hiring and orienting staff, establishing new committees with specific implementation tasks, and others. These activities will be undertaken concurrently with the implementation of habitat actions.
- *Responsibility for assembling the annual report* – This will be determined with final agreement on the funding, organizational structure, and staffing for Plan implementation. It is possible that completing the annual report may entail contributions from jointly funded staff, jurisdiction staff, a technical committee, consultants, and/or others.
- *Annual report content* – There is currently no requirement dictating how long the annual report must be or what it must describe. In addition to describing activities that are part of the plan and their results, the plan could also capture non-Plan activities that may influence the effectiveness of plan actions. Annual report content can be determined and planned for as part of finalizing the plan. Providing the desired level of detail and breadth of content will be possible only with people, time and money sufficient to complete report development tasks.
- *Annual report as communication tool* – There is a strong desire to use the annual report as a communication tool for the general public and not just as information for implementers and engaged stakeholders. Meeting this desire may require the use of several communication mechanisms (e.g., newsletter, web page, presentations to councils, etc.) and a higher level of resources.

### When will we begin to formally assess Plan effectiveness?

*The Steering Committee recommends assessing Plan effectiveness initially in Year 3.* The significant factors bearing on or emerging from these recommendations, and likely to receive additional consideration as the plan moves toward finalization and ratification, include the following:

**Figure 2.3.4 – Initial Effectiveness Assessment in Year 3**



- *Collecting effectiveness data* – Data collection for judging effectiveness will be collected at least as soon as plan implementation formally starts, if not earlier if resources allow. Three years should provide sufficient time to get an initial read of effectiveness of a subset of implemented plan actions. Collecting and drawing conclusions from effectiveness data will require a technical committee.
- *Frequency of reporting effectiveness* – It is likely that as plan implementation continues data pertaining to action effectiveness will be collected on an ongoing basis. It is also likely, however, that drawing substantive new conclusions from that data will not happen on a predictable – in this case annual – timeline. Effectiveness should be reported in the annual report on a frequency supported by data collection efforts.
- *Identifying and responding to crises* – The reporting process will not be the main avenue for communicating about unexpected events that may call for significant shifts in strategy and/or resource allocation. A more flexible and responsive mechanism that connects information to decision-makers must be identified.
- *Responding to effectiveness findings* – Just as there are limits to reaching conclusions from data regarding effectiveness, there are limits to how quickly and

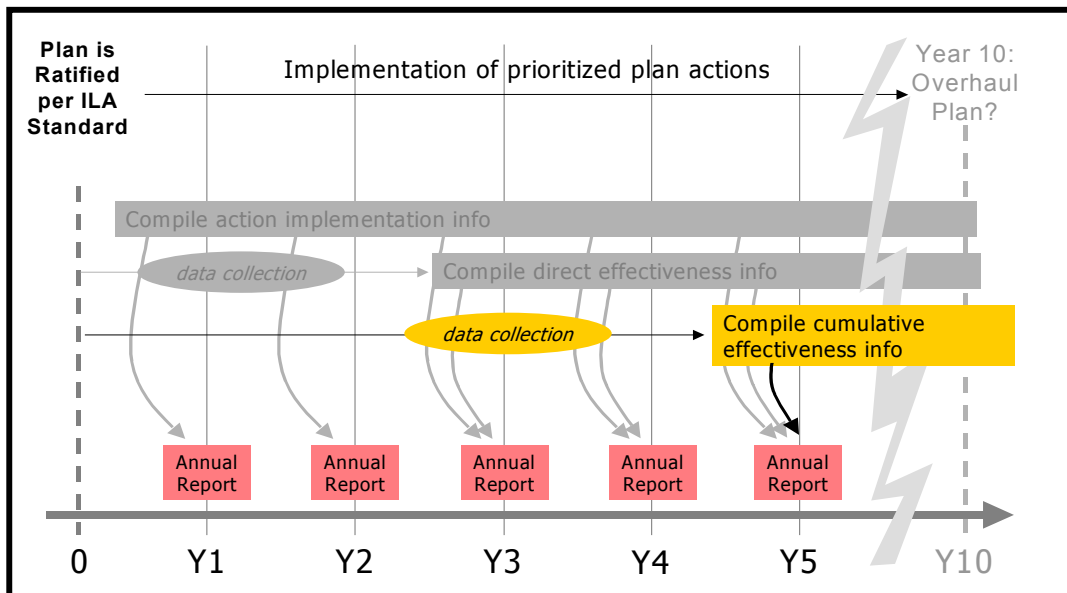
frequently implementers can respond to such conclusions. It is likely that significant changes driven by effectiveness findings are manageable every several years.

- *Reporting* – Results of this assessment can be captured in the annual report. A technical committee would play a key role in doing the analysis for this assessment.

#### When will Plan priorities and results be evaluated?

*The Steering Committee recommends evaluating plan priorities and results initially in Year 5.* Acting on this recommendation will be influenced by data collection timing limitations similar to those that affect the preceding recommendation regarding assessing effectiveness. The significant additional factors bearing on or emerging from this recommendation, and likely to receive additional consideration as the Plan moves toward finalization and ratification, include the following:

**Figure 2.3.5 – Evaluating Priorities and Progress in Year 5**



- *Relating evaluation to salmon cycles* – Year 5 is the earliest you can get a read from a salmon cycle that begins after plan implementation has officially begun, but that provides only one data point (e.g., spawner-recruit ratio) for that year class. This type of evaluation should happen every three or five years based solely on the desire to avoid synchronizing evaluation with the return of only one year class. This would be the result if evaluation occurred every fourth year.
- *Frequency of evaluating priorities and progress* – The frequency of this type of evaluation after Year 5 has not been determined. In setting this interval decision-makers will weigh several key factors including the desire to maintain some

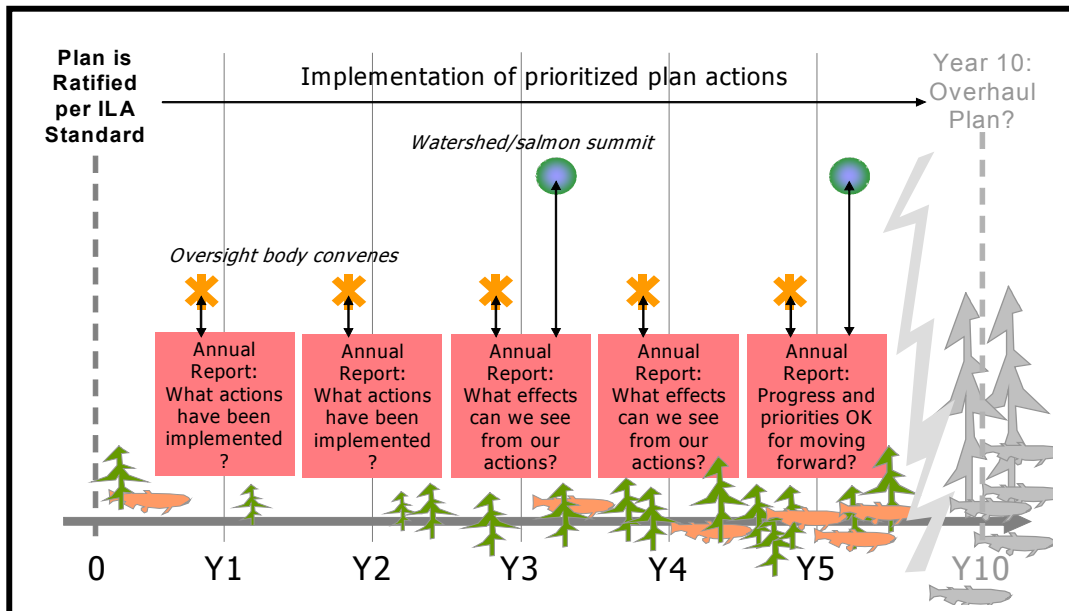
consistency in priorities over time, the need to respond to emerging negative or positive trends in a timely manner, and fundamental constraints on drawing conclusions from small data sets.

- **Reporting** – Results of this evaluation can be captured in the annual report. A technical committee would play a key role in doing the analysis for this evaluation.

When will leaders convene to review Plan status?

*The Steering Committee recommends convening a plan implementation oversight body at least annually and convening a decision-makers “summit” body in Years 3 and 5.* The significant additional factors bearing on or emerging from this recommendation, and likely to receive additional consideration as the Plan moves toward finalization and ratification, include the following:

**Figure 2.3.6 – Convening Leaders**



- **Evolving Complexity of Leadership Role** – The purposeful linkage of the leadership bodies to the reporting activity denotes an expectation that the substance of review and guidance by leaders will be progressively more complex. In Years 1 -3 leaders will focus on tracking implementation as they build their knowledge base of the challenges to and opportunities for habitat protection and restoration. By Year 5 and beyond, leaders are more directly engaged with the value and appropriateness of plan actions in the context of these challenges and opportunities.
- **Membership of Oversight and “Summit” Bodies** – The membership of both bodies has not been determined. There is an expressed preference in the Steering Committee for there to be overlapping membership across these bodies.



- **(see Part 2 for more information) Function of Oversight Body** – The oversight body would provide interpretation of priorities for staff as needed and guidance on emerging issues. It would also be the official connector between Plan implementation staff and decision-makers (“summit” body). Subgroups of the oversight body may convene more frequently on specific issues, e.g., SRFB, lobbying coordination, etc. Convening and maintaining this group will require staff resources and operations dollars.
- **(see Part 2 for more information) Function of “Summit” Body** – Summit” body provides guidance on policy, priorities, and budget. It would convene less frequently than the oversight body. Convening and maintaining this group will require staff resources and operations dollars.
- **Anticipating and Accounting for Turnover** – It is likely that even within the first five years after initiating Plan implementation there will be turnover in decision-makers and staff involved in the process. This turnover increases the risk of losing critical knowledge of priorities and opportunities. The recommended timeline builds in measures that can help maintain knowledge of progress from the plan implementation, including the suggested frequency of convening leaders and the linkage to annual reporting.